

THIRD PAPER

By O. B.

I FIND the objections I have in mind to long cases apply particularly to certain cases among the wealthy, where there is no personal feeling in regard to a nurse,—especially long summer cases, in the country, where I am isolated from my friends. Such a patient will send for me again and again, because she knows I will take good care of her and because I will fit into the household well, and I go because there will be a steady income for six months, which I need. I also know that I will be well taken care of; but there is no affection on either side. The social goings-on make it a little difficult, particularly about meals. I have to have mine when and where it is convenient. In a short case this does not happen, or not so often. And I do miss not seeing some of my own kind, whether at the *alumnæ* meetings, or lunching down town, or in my own home, or in theirs, and I feel that I do not keep in touch with what is going on. Of course my *alumnæ* journal and the nursing and medical journals supply a great deal, but it is not just the same. I dare say it is for one of greater mental calibre than I, but I have always been very dependent on my friends for inspiration in my work.

I am well, and live on “the fat of the land,” but sometimes I wish it were not so “fat;” I occasionally yearn for some plebeian food.

**DOES THE AVERAGE TRAINING-SCHOOL PREPARE
ITS NURSES FOR PRIVATE DUTY**

By A GRADUATE OF THE ILLINOIS TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES

A MODERN essayist says, “Knowledge comes of doing; never to act is never to know.” If this be a truth, how can we know, except by doing, and how can we be prepared for any work by application to another, even though that other be allied by closest relation?

Is it not true of any calling? The vine-grower is a novice in the orange grove, no matter how thoroughly he may have mastered the technique of agriculture. The most brilliant professional graduate has years of drudgery in his special line before he grasps its management. The lawyer in the courtroom; the product of West Point on

the plains; the physician in the hospital; the mining engineer; the musical or dramatic artist, and a score of others in all lines of life who, in spite of years of scientific training, are unequal to the test where the practical application is demanded.

It is but just to our excellent schools of nursing that we acknowledge with gratitude, and that after ten years have ripened judgment, that unfailing effort is expended to give pupils the education that is needed to fit them for all departments of nursing; but how can we expect results that are found in no other line of instruction?

Can we hope to acquire one specialty by the practice of another, though both be branches of the same profession? Look fairly on two presentations.

When a young woman enters a nurses' training-school, whatever may have been her status before, now she is sunk into galling unimportance. The foot of the ladder is hers, and she advances up by the way of drudgery, always under supervision, studied and directed; her health guarded, her time planned in absolute regulation; hours of sleep prescribed, food wisely chosen; she is an object of conscientious care to her severest mentor and never while she is in it, is the protection, any more than the discipline, of her school relaxed. Her hardships are many, and often of a nature to chafe the high-spirited woman, but she learns to view all of this as her immediate associates do, as a common means to a desired end. While absorbing ethics of nursing she studies humanity from its heights and its depths, and her opportunities and training impart in a large measure tact and adjustment to the exigent, but beyond certain points, and with rare exceptions, all things adapt themselves to her, or to the system of which she is a part.

As the months of her training increase, so does her importance, and she begins to realize a distinct pleasantness in her position. Life is full of achievement, interest, and associations that are most agreeable. Acquisition compensates for the hardships of acquiring, and repressions of beginnings are forgotten on the height of her pedestal, up to which others look though she may be too sensible to look down. Whatever admonitions and warnings come to her at this time of possible rough sailing, once she is beyond the direction of those more experienced than herself, are stored away as indirect information, often to be recalled when the second presentation is realized.

A pupil-nurse may not enjoy a petted existence, but it is a sheltered one, and whatever inconveniences it may offer, she has

learned to fit herself to them. Very different does the outside world appear when the shield is removed and she stands alone against the unexplored. To her, naturally a creature of method and routine, the sharpest blow to consciousness is the total lack of system in the average household.

We may clear the way of all exceptions, exclude a score of possible occurrences that could impede her progress, and keeping to the line of average only, find that in her case, as in that of all the newly trained of other crafts, however complete her technical instruction she is but ill-prepared to apply it under the new conditions.

Households vary widely in temperament, cultivation, and methods of management; the public has standards of its own and is in a position to exact deference and exert opposition. To all these variations the new beginner must adapt and readapt herself, standing alone, unsupported by the consciousness that those around her bear as she is bearing. The responsibility of life is in her hands and on her soul; she is mentally strained by the anxiety of watchfulness and apprehension; physically worn by days of twenty-four hours each, lack of sleep, irregular or unsuitable food; personal care out of the question; and hardest of all is the spiritual attrition due to the constant need of readjustment and the knowledge that she is a target of unceasing interrogation and criticism.

The greatest disadvantage one can know is to be off one's own ground, and often years pass ere a nurse may feel that in each house entered she is not an alien. To be sure much depends upon herself. Some of the human race are slow to fit occasions; often these are the most conscientious, the most to be desired, but the over-scrupulous have always a hard time until they acquire self-confidence with self-effacement.

How unlike each other are these two departments of our profession, we who have experienced both know; each recalls perhaps her special difficulties at the beginning of her career. All we think—will own to at least a few. The pity is that our experience is of little avail to help those who come after us. As we learned, they must learn; as all of us learn to live, not by what others tell us of life but by what individual experience impresses upon us.

That there be no misunderstanding, let it be set down, that this paper in enumerating a nurse's difficulties, offers no criticism to a public usually generous, appreciative and grateful. Whatever the cost to the nurse, she owes all she gives to those who furnish her with means of living. Neither do we offer a suggestion for better-

ment of training-schools; our argument admits no room for changing conditions, unless we can introduce within our hospitals the erratic and uncertain system of household management, a state of affairs neither practicable nor desirable.

If training-schools placed their pupils for the entire period of service in the sick-rooms of private houses, could they be so trained for ward nurses? Surely not without a special course. Reverse the situation and it has much the same disadvantage. The training-school gives the nurse her entry into the field of private nursing, but she must learn to use her knowledge by practical test, and grow in a new soil the seed garnered in other harvests.

ARTISTIC NURSING

By MARY F. SEWALL

Graduate of Massachusetts General Hospital

IN the March number of *THE NURSING JOURNAL* I observe with interest certain questions from a correspondent signing herself "Yearling" in regard to the custom of older nurses in the matter of performing slight services of a character which cannot be strictly called nursing, such as the washing of diapers and taking the baby out in its carriage.

As the years go by any person actively employed in a definite work, such as nursing, will find that many of the ideas with which she started out are really delusions. Certain truths, gradually brought together and formulated from the results of many experiences, she will in time acquire, which will form the foundation of her working methods. One delusion which commonly afflicts beginners is that there is some intrinsic grandeur and nobility about nursing distinguishing it from other kinds of work; it is a popular one, with good historic background. We often hear the remark: "What a noble work yours is, sacrificing yourself to make others comfortable." But we know that we are not working for charity, but following an agreeable and lucrative employment. A second delusion might be called the "professional idea." This is founded on the fact that the technical training and superior education which is now expected of nurses has raised the work to the dignity of a profession. Many graduates seem to think that upholding this professional dignity is an end in itself.

The truth of the matter is that no work is in itself ennobling or